

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1152

INFO CINCPACREP GUAM/TTPI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0046

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PP

SUBJECT: DISMISSAL OF NATIONAL PARTY MINISTERS INCREASES

SPECULATION RE POSSIBLE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS

1. FOLLOWING SOMARE'S CABINAT SHUFFLE IN EARLY DECEMBER NATIONAL PARTY MINISTERS THOMAS KAVALI AND IAMBAKEY OKUK REPORTEDLY CONSIDERED RESIGNING FROM THE COALITION. AFTER CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL DISCUSSION WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARTY, KAVALI ATTACKED SOMARE IN A STATEMENT RELEASED ON JANUARY 8 IN WHICH KAVALI CALLED FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS TO "REPLACE THE SOMARE DICTATORSHIP". BOTH OKUK AND KAVALI NEVERTHELESS MAINTAINED THAT THE NATIONAL PARTY (INCLUDING THEMSELVES) WOULD "FOR THE TIME BEING" REMAIN IN THE COALITION "BECAUSE IT DID NOT WANT TO CREATE POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND CHAOS."

2. AFTER TWO WEEKS OF FENCING IT WAS REPORTED THAT OKUK HAD BEEN TOLD TO RESIGN OR BE DISMISSED FOR DISLOYALTY TO SOMARE AND THE GOVERNMENT, WHILE KAVALI WAS GIVEN THE MORE DESIRABLE OPTION TO EITHER PUBLICALLY APOLOGIZE OR FACE DISMISSAL. THE FOLLOWING DAY DISMISSAL PAPERS WERE SENT TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL UPON THE ADVICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER. SOMARE PUBLICALLY COMMENTED THAT HE COULD NOT ALLOW THE TWO

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TO CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE HIS LEADERSHIP FROM WITHIN THE MINISTRY; BUT THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THE OTHER

NATIONAL PARTY LEADERS. KAVALI AND OKUK WERE THEN FORMALLY DISMISSED ON THE 25TH.

3. THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PARTY FELL IN LINE BEHIND SOMARE STATING THAT THE PUBLIC OUTBURST OF OKUK AND KAVALI HAD NOT BEEN MADE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE PARTY, AND ON THE 27TH, NATIONAL PARTY MEMBER KOBAL KALE (CHIMBU DISTRICT) WAS APPOINTED EDUCATION MINISTER TO REPLACE OKUK, AND OSCAR TAMMUR, A MATANGUAN MEMBER FROM EAST NEW BRITAIN WAS APPOINTED TO THE NEWLY CREATED PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY. KAVALI'S SUCCESSOR AS MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES HAS NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED.

4. COMMENT: SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE A WEEK BEFORE THE DISMISSAL REVEALED THAT SOMARE'S STRATEGY WOULD BE TO SPLIT OFF OKUK AND KAVALI FROM THE NATIONAL PARTY, THEREBY REDUCING THE COALITION'S STRENGTH BY ONLY TWO VOTES. THIS LOSS HAS BEEN NEATLY BALANCED BY A PROBABLE GAIN OF TWO MATAUNGAN VOTES BY INTRODUCING OSCAR TAMMUR INTO THE MINISTRY. (DAMIEN KEREKU, ALSO A MATAUNGAN, WILL NOW PROBABLY SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT.) SOMARE'S POLICY WAS EVIDENTLY SUCCESSFUL BUT HAS LEFT SOME RESIDUE OF BITTERNESS.

5. SIR JOHN GUISE (GOVERNOR GENERAL) INFORMED AN EMBASSY EMPLOYEE THAT HE IS PERSONALLY QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT HIS CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE IN THE DISMISSAL OF MINISTERS AND HAS ADVISED SOMARE THAT FUTURE DISMISSALS SHOULD BE DONE AT THE ADVICE OF THE PARLIAMENT. GUISE FEARS THAT HIS FARFLUNG FAMILY AND RELATIONS MAY BE SUBJECTED TO "PAYBACK" BY UNSOPHISTICATED HIGHLANDERS WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL DISMISSES MINISTERS ON THE ADVICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

6. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE OKUK/KAVALI AFFAIR, GUISE ASSERTED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED HIM TO DISMISS THE GOVERNMENT, APPOINT A CARETAKER GOVT., AND CALL FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS. GUISE REFUSED TO DO THIS STATING THAT HE HAD NO CAUSE TO DISMISS THE GOVT. AND THAT IF SOMARE WANTED ELECTIONS HE SHOULD ENGINEER A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN  
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THE PARLIAMENT. GUISE ASSERTS THAT MATTERS MAY COME TO A HEAD IN THE MARCH PARLIAMENT SESSION, AND THAT TEI ABAL (LEADER OF OPPOSITION) NOW CLAIMS HE HAS 53 VOTES LINED UP FOR A NO CONFIDENCE VOTE. WEAKNESS OF PARTY DISCIPLINE, HOWEVER, MAKES US SUSPICIOUS OF HIS CLAIM.  
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